

The Inside Track: Netherlands clean, colorful

Travel

By PETER GERAN

The Netherlands or Lowlands derives its name from the fact that almost half its land is lower than sea level, the country having been retrieved from the sea.

You'll want to visit the Netherlands because it is beautiful, interesting, fun and a lot more. It is breathtaking to see acres and acres of multi-colored flowers, and all the diversity of colors never clashes. It just doesn't happen in nature. You arrive at Schiphol Airport, one of the most modern airports in the world, with telescoping boarding ramps and moving boardwalks.

THROUGHOUT the cities and the

countryside, it will strike you how clean everything is kept and that there is a total absence of poverty (something that makes travel in the Far East and South America so distressing).

The Dutch wash their windows almost every week, each homeowner scrubs the sidewalk in front of his property, and the immaculate curtains are pulled aside so that everyone can see the flower pots and the neat interiors.

Amsterdam is the largest city and has been called the "Venice of the North" (though I don't know if this really pleases the Dutch) because of its multitude of canals. Make sure to take the sightseeing tour of Amsterdam by boat to see the facades of its beautiful old houses—which are still in use.

This is a living town with everything old well-preserved and still in service. The same tour by night with champagne served on the boat is

charming.

Dining out is an adventure. You can have a typical Dutch "Ouisitter," a colorful sandwich with eggs, or the ethnic foods from many countries: France, Germany, Hungary, Japan, Tunisia and especially Indonesia.

A SPECIAL feast is the Indonesian Rijstafel, an Oriental menu of 15-20 dishes, a product of the Netherlands colonial days in Indonesia. We will

supply you with a list of restaurants upon request.

For culture, visit the churches, museums and Royal Palace but don't forget a visit to the Heineken Brewery (cheese, crackers and beer on the house) and the diamond factory (no free diamonds but tremendous buys).

Planning a trip? Send your travel questions to Peter Geran, The Inside Track, the Observer & Eccentric, 1225 Bowers, Birmingham 48012.

DINING AND ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

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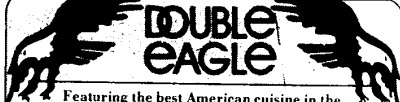
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